

PLANNING STATEMENT

24a Baron Street
Rochdale
OL16 1SJ

Proposal

Change of use from storage units to 7 self-contained apartments (Use Class C3).

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted by 'Planning Management Ltd' on behalf of the applicant who owns the property at 24 Baron St, Rochdale OL16 1SJ. The building is currently empty and, in the past, has been used as storage space for local businesses. The applicant would like to secure planning permission to re-use the building and make alterations to suit the proposed use. The delivery of the scheme would make a positive change to the area in this central location.
- 1.2 This Planning Statement, site plans, full floor plans, and elevation plans submitted as part of this proposal make reference to the land use, constraints, policy, guidance and possible issues. The Statement addresses these matters categorically.
- 1.3 Compared to other housing markets in the North West and Greater Manchester, the Rochdale and north east Manchester housing market is generally less attractive. The housing on offer in the borough has stark differences in terms of quality and price and it fails to address the needs of existing or future residents. An oversupply of older terraced housing and a lack of high value housing across the borough means that it fails to attract and retain residents with higher incomes.
- 1.4 An ambitious target of providing 460 additional homes per year is considered necessary to meet demand and to help regenerate the borough. The latest Housing Land Availability Assessment indicates that there is considerable scope to meet its housing target using previously developed sites, especially in the south, and with limited use of greenfield sites.
- 1.5 The Council needs to focus the right type of housing in the right areas, maintain the regeneration of older areas of housing and social housing estates and ensure that the community infrastructure necessary to support areas of housing growth are provided.
- 1.6 Further to the above, the NPPF states that Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.

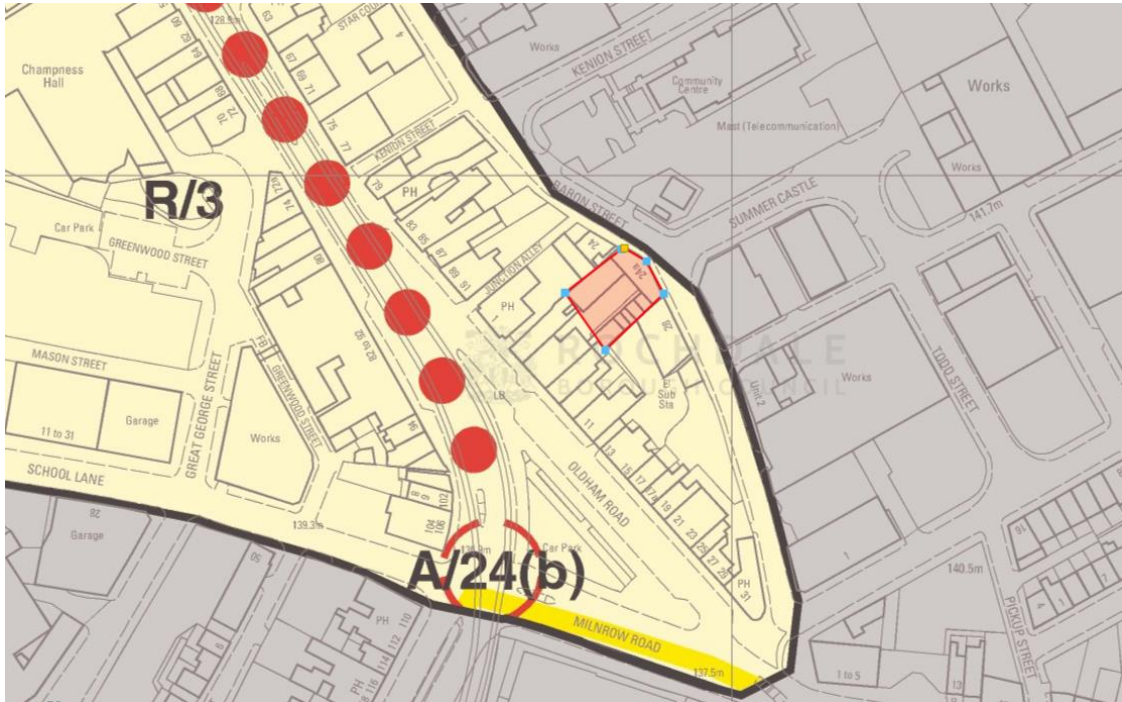
- 1.7 The applicant would like to work with the Council in order to secure approval for the proposed use and alterations.



Above: Proposed site, front elevation.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site relates to a 'U' shaped, part three storey, part two storey building which fronts directly onto Baron Street. The building is vacant and has been mainly used for storage in the past. The building also hosts an existing Studio flat at second floor level towards the front of the site.
- 2.2 The building is within a small row of buildings that are run down and in a state of disrepair. The principal front building is narrow in width and appears as two storeys in height with an uneven roofscape when viewed from Baron Street. At the rear, this section of the building is three storeys in height due to land levels which slope down from Baron Street to Oldham Road.
- 2.3 This principle front section of the building has numerous architectural features including brick detailing, a horse's head to the front elevation and a bull's head to the rear. The two projecting arms at the rear are brick and are both two storey in height with pitched roofs. To the rear of the building is a row of two storey shops on Oldham Road with various single storey and two storey projections. Access to the rear is through an alleyway from Oldham Road. Other than the front elevation, all windows face into the courtyard at the rear.
- 2.4 The property is within the main town centre of Rochdale (UDP Policy G/S/1), the Defined Urban Area (G/D/1), a Physical Regeneration Area and within the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area. 24A and 28 Baron Street are also identified as non-designated heritage assets. 24 Baron Street is a Grade II Listed Building. The opposite side of Baron Street falls within a mixed employment zone (see below);



- 2.5 **Above:** Image taken from the Local Plan Proposals Map; The application site (red outline) is located within the town centre conservation area.



- 2.6 **Above:** Proposed Location Plan.



- 2.7 **Above:** Aerial image indicates the application site from Baron Street and also shows the variety of commercial, and retail uses in the vicinity of the site.



- 2.8 **Above:** Aerial image indicates the rear elevations of the application site in 3D form from Oldham Road.

3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The applicant is applying for planning permission to change the use of the storage space to 7 flats.
- 3.2 Minimal changes are made externally to the building. The proposal involves the removal of existing roller shutters to doors and windows and the insertion of new windows and doors at ground and first floor level which would include sandstone head and cills to match the existing.
- 3.3 The Proposed floor Plan shows 3 x 1100ltr Euro bins would be located inside the under-croft passage which leads to the rear courtyard of the site when accessed from Oldham Road. This is a shared access with the building directly to the rear of the site on Oldham Road. The main pedestrian access to each flat would be from the front of the property along Baron Street.
- 3.4 The proposed flats would comprise of the following internal areas:
- Flat 1 (1-bedroom, 1-person) – 45.80sqm
 - Flat 2 (3-bedroom, 4-person) – 84.09sqm
 - Flat 3 (Studio, 2-person) – 64.89 sqm
 - Flat 4 (2-bedroom, 3-person) – 67.92sqm
 - Flat 5 (3-bedroom, 4-person) – 78.62sqm.
 - Flat 6 (1 bedroom, 2-person) – 53.54 sqm
 - Flat 7 (1-bedroom, 2-person) – 61.24sqm
- 3.5 The courtyard area would provide good sized outdoor amenity space retained to the rear of the site for future residents.
- 3.6 A new cycle storage area would also be introduced for future residents.



3.7 **Above:** Courtyard area looking towards front portion of building, new windows and doors to be installed to ground floor



Above: North western elevation from courtyard area, shutters to be removed.



3.9 **Above:** South eastern elevation from courtyard area showing undercroft access.

4.0. INVOLVEMENT

- 4.1 Pre-application advice in this instance has been sought from the Council (PREAPP/00086/25 dated 4th December 2025) The proposed scheme has taken into consideration the details required, and issues raised as part of the Councils response. The application put forward is an acceptable proposal providing quality development in this area whilst bringing a mainly disused property back into a viable use.
- 4.2 This planning Statement has been submitted as part of the planning application to provide a reasoned justification for its acceptability using local and national planning policy and guidance.
- 4.3 The issues of highways safety, amenity of the surrounding area, design and the principle of the development are taken into consideration in the assessment below.

Summary of PREAPP/00086/25

- 4.4 Although the principle of residential is considered acceptable, there are a number of concerns that need to be addressed before any future planning application could be supported. Realistically, the number of proposed units will need to be reduced, and the layout re-configured internally. The main concerns relate to the separation distances between windows, the rear access, the bedroom to living ratio, the provision of daylight and sunlight and noise and disturbance. There are also a number of other matters that would need to be addressed as noted above in terms of meeting the NDSS and the shared use of part of the site.

Application response

- 4.5 The following changes of note have been made to this full application in order to mitigate the harm mentioned;
- 4.6 Changes made to the layout of Apartments 1, 2, 3 and 4 to support the Daylight/Sunlight Assessment) as follows:

- Apartment 1: Add one additional window measuring 600 mm(W) × 1500 mm(H). Increased the width of the existing window to 1900mm
- Apartment 2: Reconfigure to create a living room and a separate kitchen. Kitchen moved to the rear and separated, floor area 5.5m², and 600mm window added.
- Apartment 3: Removed the wall between the bedroom area and the living room to create a studio apartment.
- Apartment 4: Reconfigured to create a living room and a separate kitchen. Kitchen moved to rear and separated, floor area 5.79m², additional window 1008mm added
- Apartment 4 – Bedrooms: Bedroom 1, 2 and 3 window height increased to 1500mm, Bedroom 1 (previously noted incorrectly as bedroom 3) now shows a separate closet area

4.6 It is acknowledged that apartments 2, 4 and 5 currently do not meet minimum spacing given the close-knit town centre location. However, to mitigate these windows would include privacy screening film which would provide the necessary privacy.

4.7 Please note that the Daylight Assessment submitted also includes a section to confirm that if such film was installed to these apartments, they would still achieve a pass rating.

4.8 The layout has been changed to include access to all flats from the front of the building from Baron Street.

4.9 In addition to the above, a number of professional reports have been submitted as part of this application which include;

- Bat Preliminary Assessment
- Heritage Statement

- Daylight and Sunlight Assessment
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Crime Impact Statement

5.0 HISTORY

- 5.1 A history check has been undertaken which has revealed the following planning history for 24 Baron Street, there is no planning history for 24a baron Street;

Reference	78/D07194	Application type	
Site address	24 Baron Street Rochdale	Description	Change Of Use From Dwellinghouse To Offices And Stores
Status	Decision Made	Decision	Approve with Conditions
Reference	87/D20030	Application type	Full planning permission
Site address	24 Baron Street Rochdale	Description	Use Of Premises As Wholesale And Retail Glass Merchants With Living Accommodation Above.
Status	Decision Made	Decision	Withdrawn
Reference	88/D21854	Application type	Full planning permission
Site address	24 Baron Street Rochdale	Description	Erection Of 6 Feet High Perimeter Fence With Gates
Status	Decision Made	Decision	Approve with Conditions

6.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

- 6.1 Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications to be determined in accordance with policies in the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Applications which are not in accordance with Development Plan policies should be refused unless material considerations justify granting permission. Similarly, proposals which accord with Development Plan policies should be approved unless there are material considerations which would justify a refusal of permission. It is therefore necessary to decide whether this proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan and then take account of other material considerations.
- 6.2 Rochdale's Core Strategy was adopted in July 2016 and is the key Development Plan Document. It replaces significant elements of the existing Unitary Development Plan as the document that sets out the long-term strategic policies for Rochdale's future development and will form the framework that planning applications will be assessed against.
- 6.3 The Core Strategy seeks to deliver sustainable development and growth in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It aims to increase investment in the borough and to make it a more prosperous place by 2028. The Core Strategy will have a major role in guiding the regeneration of the borough, building on the investment that has already taken place in some areas and identifying where to focus on next.
- 6.4 The following Local and national policies have relevance to the proposal:

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan was adopted and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the 9 authorities covered by the plan on 21st March 2024. The following policies are relevant:

JP-S1 Sustainable Development

JP-S2 Carbon and Energy

JP-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment

JP-H1: Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development

JP-H2 Affordability of New Housing

JP-H3 Type, Size and Design of New Housing

JP-H4: Density of New Housing

JP-G7 Trees and Woodland

JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

JP-P1: Sustainable Places

JP-P2 Heritage

JP-C8 Transport Requirements of New Development

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO1 Delivering a more prosperous economy

E1 Establishing thriving town, district and local centres

E2 Increasing jobs and prosperity

E3 Focusing on economic growth corridors and areas

SO2 Creating successful and healthy communities

C1 Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places

C2 Focusing on regeneration areas and economic growth corridors/areas

C3 Delivering the right type of housing

C6 Improving health and wellbeing

SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place

P1 Improving Image

P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

P3 Improving design of new development

SO4 Promoting a greener environment

G6 Enhancing green infrastructure

G7 Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity

G8 Managing water resources and flood risk

G9 Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability

SO5 Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport

T2 Improving accessibility

DM1 General development requirements

SD1 Delivering sustainable development

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

R/3 Drake Street Physical Regeneration Area, Rochdale

G/S/1 Hierarchy and Role of Centres

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

Supplementary Planning Guidance note 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' (June 2016).

Milkstone, Deeplish and Newbold SPD

7.0 ASSESSMENT

Principle

- 7.1 The proposed development of the property will bring a mostly disused existing building and wider site into a suitable and sustainable use which is currently open to crime, dumping and anti-social behaviour, and could become an eyesore over time. It is positioned in a prominent location in the town centre, and an opportunity has arisen where investment can be made to bring the building to a suitable functional use and where it would not have a negative impact on the surrounding area.
- 7.2 In terms of housing, the proposal would increase the supply of smaller housing units in the locality. The proposal would therefore make a small but positive contribution to the number and mix of household units on brownfield sites in Inner Rochdale, consistent with Policies in the Local Plan and the NPPF.
- 7.3 Policy G/D/1 of the UDP aims to locate new development in the urban area in order to support urban regeneration and to protect the countryside. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ and states that development plans should be approved without delay. Having specific regard to residential developments, paragraph 61 of the NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to “support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes”. Paragraph 73 of the NPPF also states that ‘small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area’.
- 7.4 The NPPF sets out at paragraph 128 that local planning authorities should take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs. It goes on to emphasise that authorities should support the use of retail and employment land for homes in areas of high housing demand, provided this would not undermine key economic sectors or sites or the vitality and viability of town centres, and would be compatible with other policies in this Framework.

- 7.5 In accordance with the definition set out in Annex 2 of the NPPF, the site is considered to represent previously developed land. Core Strategy Policy C1 sets out that the Council will seek to maximise the potential of previously developed sites within the urban area to achieve a target of 80% of new housing on Previously Developed Land.
- 7.6 Policy E1 of the Core Strategy also highlights that residential, amongst other uses, will be focused within town, district and local centres to promote the viability and vitality of these centres. Policy C1 of the Core Strategy outlines that the Council will promote the reuse and regeneration of vacant and underused previously developed sites and focus only on sustainable greenfield sites which provide the best access to a range of services, jobs and facilities and have limited impact on green infrastructure and amenity.
- 7.7 It is also considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental effect on the safe and efficient operation of the existing transport and road infrastructure. Highway's safety is further discussed in the relevant section below.
- 7.8 Taking all of the above into consideration along with the town centre location, the change of use to residential is acceptable in principle subject to all other material considerations noted below. Policies C1, E1 and E2 of the Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy G/D/1 of the UDP and the NPPF apply.

Impact on Amenity

- 7.9 The Pre-application response states that all the proposed flats other than Flat 1 either meet or exceed the NDSS space requirements. Bedroom sizes also seem to meet the NDSS space requirements.
- 7.10 In terms of **flat 1**, although this provides 45.8sqm of space, a two-storey flat needs to be a minimum of 58sqm as per the NDSS. In this instance it is not possible to achieve NDSS for this flat. However, the flat has been sensibly laid out with living/kitchen space downstairs and sleeping and bathroom space upstairs. The flat is also much larger than the minimal 37sqm. In addition, substantial weight should be attached to the reuse of

a non-designated heritage asset which has laid empty for a number of years. Significant investment is being made to provide housing in a sustainable location and boost the supply of homes, as such although over two stories, the benefits of providing and using the building as far greater and should be accepted.

- 7.11 In terms of **flat 3**, this is now a studio apartment, with 3 windows and a door serving the property which will have windows. As such the open nature of the layout would provide significant light.
- 7.12 **Flat 2, 4 and 5** – the layouts have been changed since the preapplication to these flats with more space given to living areas.
- 7.13 Consideration has also been given to the distance between habitable room windows over the courtyard area where longer distances cannot be achieved in this tight knit town centre location. To maintain privacy One Way Clear Window Film would be placed on habitable rooms. This is a method used in most locations in town centres and is effective. A sunlight and daylight assessment is also provided which states sufficient natural light would be provided to each habitable room within the development.



Above: One way privacy film.

- 7.14 In terms of outdoor amenity space all flats would have access to the courtyard area. This area is private and enclosed and therefore provides a suitable outdoor space that achieves a reasonable level of amenity for future occupants. Also, there are public open spaces provided within a short walking distance of the site within the town centre for future occupiers to sit and enjoy.

- 7.15 The doors to each flat would have access control, this would offer simple solution to restrict access into the building. Authorised individuals would carry a key fob and when access through a restricted door is required, the fob is held in front of a reader placed next to the door. The solution is flexible and would be used on the rear doors to restrict access to the general public. The mechanism would keep the users of the site safe. All internal doors would be fire doors which would be soft close to limit the noise.
- 7.16 In light of the above, it is considered that the development would provide adequate space about buildings, so as to protect future residents from any excessive levels of overshadowing and/or loss of privacy and a good standard of living accommodation. The application is therefore acceptable in this respect and would meet with the expectations of Policies along with the relevant requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Visual Appearance

- 7.17 Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy requires development proposals to demonstrate high quality design. In addition, paragraphs 131 and 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) state that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- 7.18 The site lies within the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area off Baron Street. The building forms part of a cluster of historic industrial buildings dating from the early 19th century. The building has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset, due to its architectural and historic interest and its group value with surrounding properties. A separate Heritage impact assessment is submitted as part of this application.
- 7.19 The proposed re-use and conversion of the building to residential in principle would help to increase activity and footfall within this part of the Conservation Area and would provide a long-term use for the building.

- 7.20 The submitted information shows that the conversion retains all of the existing walls and openings as far as possible. New openings to form windows have been kept to the minimum in order to viably convert the building.
- 7.21 The roller shutters currently around the building would be removed which would enhance the appearance of the building.
- 7.22 The current windows at the site are of white upvc material. It is acknowledged that the use of UPVC within Conservation Areas is not generally supported, however given that the vast majority of openings as existing are of UPVC material, the small number of proposed openings with upvc windows id considered appropriate in this instance and would not harm the buildings character. These changes are also mainly within the envelope of the building where they would not be viewed by the public.
- 7.23 Given the information above and that provided within the submitted Heritage Statement the proposed changes are in accordance Polices DM1, P2 and P3 of the Rochdale Core Strategy, PfE Policy JP-P2 and the NPPF apply.

Highways

- 7.24 Policy T2 of the adopted Core Strategy is regarding improved accessibility and parking. Policy JP-C8 of PfE states ‘we will require new development to be located and designed to enable and encourage walking, cycling and public transport use, to reduce the negative effects of car dependency, and help deliver high quality, attractive, liveable and sustainable environments’.
- 7.25 Paragraph 116 of the NPPF makes clear that ‘Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe’.

- 7.26 Government's policy on parking is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states that when setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account:
- the accessibility of the development;
 - the type, mix and use of development
 - the availability of and opportunities for public transport;
 - local car ownership levels; and
 - the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.
- 7.27 The site is located in the town centre of Rochdale and within a short walk of the shops and services, in addition, the good accessibility location of the site should be considered in favour of the limited highways impact. The Tram stop is also within close walking distance.
- 7.28 Given its location on a main route into and out of the main town centre, with excellent bus links and parking available on streets and in public car parks, it would be sufficient provision for a development of this size in a location as sustainable as this (town centre, close to a major bus and tram route); as such although no car parking spaces are provided, this is considered justified for this type of proposal.
- 7.29 Secure Cycle parking would also be introduced to the rear of the building which would result in less reliance on the car, and also provide an alternative mode of transport, including reducing greenhouse gases. It is not expected that this proposal would impact negatively upon the surrounding highway network.
- 7.30 Given the details, it is considered the proposed development can safely be provided without resulting in harm to pedestrian and highway safety. The proposed development as demonstrated would be in accordance with the Councils Local Plan and the NPPF where the proposal would not have a severe cumulative impact. In addition, parking restrictions are in place where poor and awkward parking would be avoided.

Landscaping and Ecology

- 7.31 Policy G6 establishes that development should protect and improve green spaces. Policy G7 of the Core Strategy requires developments to protect existing biodiversity including trees and vegetation. Policy JP-G8 of PfE states that ‘through local planning and associated activities a net enhancement of biodiversity resources will be sought’. The NPPF also requires the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Core Strategy Policy DM1 also requires new developments to incorporate, where appropriate, high quality landscape schemes.
- 7.32 There are no trees, landscaping or vegetation on site and the site is located within a densely urban area however, there are trees nearby and there is potential for crevice dwelling bats in small cracks and crevices within the roof space. An initial Preliminary roost assessment has been submitted as part of this application which has summarised that the building has low habitat value for roosting bats and will need to be subject to one bat emergence/re-entry surveys within the optimal survey period. This can be conditioned as part of any approval.
- 7.33 Planning policy encourages enhancements and net gains for biodiversity to be delivered through the planning system. Therefore, to provide enhancements as part of this development bat and bird boxes are to be provided onto the building as shown on the elevation plans.
- 7.34 As such the application is in accordance with Policies DM1, G6 and G7 of the Core Strategy, Policies JP-G6, JP-G7 and JP-G8 of PfE and the NPPF apply.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 It has been demonstrated that the proposed development can be carried out in full compliance with the Council's policies in the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. The development would provide a good quality residential development which would bring a positive contribution into the area of Rochdale without creating a significant detrimental impact on the amenity of the local occupiers and residents.
- 8.2 In addition, the development would bring an existing heritage asset that requires investment back into an appropriate use, providing an enhancement to the building and the surrounding area. As such the proposal should be supported in full by the Council.
- 8.3 When considering future development, the Council should take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. It will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions, which means that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social, and environmental conditions in the area.